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Calls grow for UK PM to go

Senior ministers tell Johnson to quit; PM remains defiant amid spate of resignations

AGENCIES

Cabinet ministers gathered in Boris Johnson's official residence yesterday to tell him to quit as British leader after he insisted he would not stand down in the face of a mounting rebellion within his party.

With more than 30 government resignations and many lawmakers in his Conservative Party in open revolt, some senior ministers were in Downing Street to tell the prime minister he needed to go, BBC, Sky News and other outlets said. At least one was there to back him if he decided to fight on.

The 58-year-old leader's grip on power has been slipping since Tuesday night, when Rishi Sunak resigned as finance minister and Sajid Javid quit as health secretary.

Both said they could no longer tolerate the culture of scandal that has dogged Johnson for months, including lockdown lawbreaking in Downing Street.

But at the parliamentary committee, and an earlier question and answer session with MPs in parliament, he defiantly vowed to get on with the job.

"I'm not going to give a running commentary on political events," he told the committee when asked about the cabinet delegation.

"We're going to get on with the government of the country."

He added: "What we need is a stable government, loving each other as Conservatives, getting on with our

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The weekly Mohasthan Haat cattle market in Bogura's Shibganj upazila is bustling with people as the sale of sacrificial animals has picked up ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. Medium-sized bulls, which were sold for Tk 60,000 to Tk 80,000 each, were in high demand. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

15-20 criminals involved in BCL leader's murder

Says Rab after arresting two in Cox's Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A group of 15 to 20 people murdered Faysal Uddin, former joint general secretary of Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila Chhatra League, on Sunday.

Rab-11 Deputy Commander Major Manjur Mehedi made the remarks yesterday after arresting two suspects.

The group stabbed and killed Faysal in five to 10 minutes, he said at a press briefing.

Rab arrested Azizul Haque Sikdar, 34, the main accused, and his cohort Firoz Alam, 33, on Tuesday, the official said.

"After their arrest, Azizul said he was involved in the crime and disclosed the names of his other cohorts who took part in the killing mission," the Rab official claimed.

The duo was handed over to the Cox's Bazar Sadar Police Station after the press briefing.

Rab is conducting operations to arrest the rest of the suspects, the Rab official said.

Nasir Uddin, elder brother of the slain BCL leader, filed a case accusing 17 named, including Azizul and Firoz, and 12 unnamed persons on Tuesday night, said Selim Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Cox's Bazar Sadar Police Station.

Police arrested six people, including two women, on

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CTG CONTAINER DEPOT FIRE

Owners' negligence, lax monitoring to blame

Finds govt probe body

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Sheer negligence of the owners of BM Container Depot Ltd and lax monitoring and enforcement of laws by the government authorities concerned led to the fatal blast at the Sitakunda depot on June 4, a probe has found.

The blast, which triggered a massive fire, happened in one of the hydrogen peroxide-laden containers stored in the open along with others, violating related rules and regulations, it revealed.

The investigation committee, formed by the Chattogram divisional commissioner's office, submitted its 19-page report to Chattogram Divisional Commissioner Md Ashraf Uddin yesterday.

The committee, led by Chattogram Additional Commissioner Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, attached 300 pages and official documents to the report. The pages contained eyewitness statements.

The probe body has also made 20 recommendations, including amending several rules and regulations on depot operations, monitoring and management, to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

At least 51 people, including 10 firefighters, were killed and more than 250 injured in the blast.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Mizanur yesterday said they submitted the report with 20 recommendations so that such an incident did not recur.

"The owners of the depot and the monitoring departments concerned are responsible for the incident. They cannot abdicate their responsibilities," he said.

Wishing anonymity, a probe committee member said, "We had to study a lot during the investigation as the related laws did not clearly mention which authorities would deal with the safety management and monitoring of the container depot.

"Also, the laws do not specify who will monitor the compliance of IMDG [International Maritime Dangerous Goods] code. We faced some problems when we launched the investigation as no authorities would take the responsibilities for enforcing the related rules."

He said the investigation identified some vital issues, including the no mention in the rules about who would monitor the safety issues.

Another committee member, who preferred to be unnamed, said the probe found poor monitoring of the container depot by the Chittagong Port Authority.

"The name of hydrogen peroxide is not on the explosives department's list of explosives, but it is listed as a hazardous explosive in the rules of Department of Environment," he told The Daily Star.

The depot had stored at least 27 containers of hydrogen peroxide.

The committee member said they have sent letters to six government departments concerned, including the

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Jitu admits to hitting teacher with stump

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ashraful Islam Jitu, the key accused in the college teacher Utpal Kumar Sarker murder case, yesterday confessed to a magistrate that he beat his teacher with a cricket stump.

"I was aggrieved as the teacher warned me for relationship with a girl on the college campus. Moreover, the teacher often rebuked me for various reasons," Jitu, a 10 grader of Haji Yunus Ali School and College in Savar's Ashulia, said in his confessional statement.

Dhaka's Senior Judicial Magistrate Rajib Hasan recorded his statement after investigation officer Emdadul Haque, a sub-inspector of Ashulia Police Station, produced Jitu at his chamber, said court sources.

After the statement was recorded, Jitu was sent back to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

According to his birth registration, Jitu is 19.

In his statement, Jitu said a few days before the incident, the teacher warned him for his relationship with the girl.

Quoting Jitu, the court sources said to impress his female friend, he planned to assault the teacher and brought a cricket stump to the school. He hit the teacher with the stump when

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BLOGGER KILLING

Condemned killer held in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special team of Kolkata police has arrested Faisal Ahmed who was sentenced to death for the killing of blogger and writer Ananta Bijoy Das in Sylhet.

Confirming the development, a top official of Anti-Terrorism Unit of Bangladesh Police said they have already taken steps to bring back Faisal.

"We have been looking for Faisal for the last five months. Recently, we came to know about his whereabouts and got his phone number used in India and we then shared the information with Kolkata police," the official told The Daily Star

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Black fumes billowing out the chimney of an auto rice mill pollute the air in Jabusa Chourasta area of Khulna's Rupsha upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Pilgrims flock to Makkah as hajj begins

AFP, Makkah

The biggest hajj pilgrimage since the Covid pandemic began yesterday, with hundreds of thousands of worshippers at Saudi Arabia's holiest site in Saudi Arabia's Makkah.

One million fully vaccinated Muslims, including 850,000 from abroad, are allowed at this year's hajj, a major break from two years of drastically curtailed numbers due to the pandemic.

At Makkah's Grand Mosque, pilgrims performed the "tawaf", the circumambulation of the Kaaba, the large cubic structure draped in golden-embroidered black

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€2b underground 'water battery' turns on in Switzerland

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A giant "water battery" capable of storing as much energy as 400,000 electric car batteries has been switched on in Switzerland.

The €2 billion project, located nearly 600 metres beneath the Swiss Alps, was under construction for 14 years.

Its 20 million kWh capacity will allow excess energy produced from renewable sources to be stored for future use, thus helping to stabilise the electricity grid and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

The hydro battery works by using the excess energy to pump water between two separate reservoirs at different altitudes in the Swiss

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